

High Schools and Synod Listening Sessions

Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Newark are asked to assist the Archdiocese in involving young people in the **Synod on Synodality** by encouraging students to participate in listening sessions. High schools can conduct listening sessions for their students or encourage students to participate in listening sessions conducted in parishes or in youth ministry groups.

Below are links to videos that explain what the Synod on Synodality is and why participation of young people is so vital to the process.

Synod on Synodality- All You Need to Know (through Sketches and images)

<https://youtu.be/15IAktuejwo> (6 minutes 23 seconds)

Cardinal Tobin's message to the Archdiocese on the Synod

<https://youtu.be/ciUq9YmL8CY> (4 minutes 25 seconds)

For those high schools interested in conducting listening sessions the following process is suggested.

- Determine **when and where** school listening sessions will be conducted.
 - *The Listening Session for high school students is designed to be a 90-minute session but can be divided into two shorter sessions.*
 - *Input from listening sessions is due to the Archdiocese no later than March 15th. Use the School Input Form provided at the end of this document to submit your school's input to the Archdiocese.*
 - *You will need a large meeting space with tables for groups of 5 or 6 people.*

- Provide students with information about the Synod on Synodality using one of the videos mentioned above. Let students know how your school will provide opportunities for their participation through listening sessions in school. Invite students to sign up for the listening session.

- Identify who will serve as the Main Facilitator/s. This should be a teacher or member of the school staff. The Main Facilitator works with the school coordinator to make sure all is in place for the listening sessions and leads the listening session process as outlined in the *High School Listening Session Guide* (pages 3-6 of this document). The Main Facilitator:
 - welcomes the group
 - provides an explanation of the listening session process
 - introduces the leader of opening prayer
 - gives direction to the small groups
 - keeps track of time
 - leads wrap-up discussion with large group
 - introduces leader of closing prayer
 - collects Group Recording Sheets

- Determine how many small groups (5-6 students) will be needed and identify students to serve as Table Facilitators and Table Scribes.
 - **Table Facilitator:** Asks the questions, keeps the discussion moving and on topic, makes sure everyone who wishes to speak has the opportunity to do so.
 - **Table Scribe:** Takes notes during the discussion of each question. Works with table facilitator to capture the key points and themes from participants' sharing. Completes the Group Recording Sheet and submits it to the Main Facilitator.

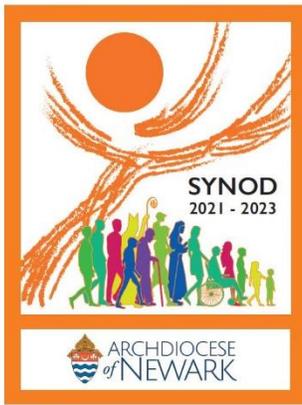
- Each small group table will need:
 - Pens/pencils
 - Copies of the *Listening Session Participant Sheet* (pages 7 & 8 of this document)
 - A copy of the *Guidelines for Table Sharing* -one per table (page 9 of this document)
 - **For Table Facilitator:** A copy of the *High School Listening Session Guide*
 - **For the Table Scribe:** Paper for taking notes
Copy of the *Group Recording Sheet* (pages 10-13 of this document)

• **Conduct your Listening Sessions**

See the *High School Listening Session Guide* (pages 3-6 of this document) for information about how to conduct the listening session.

Please see the following pages for:

- *Listening Session Participant Sheet* (pages 7 & 8)
- *Guidelines for Table Sharing* (page 9)
- *Group Recording Sheet* (pages 10-13)
- *School Input Form* (pages 14-18)



HIGH SCHOOL LISTENING SESSION GUIDE

The Listening Session is designed as a 90-minute session but can be split into two sessions, if necessary. Groups should be 5 or 6 people at a table. If feasible, assign students to groups to allow for a better mix of students in each group. Each table should have a student assigned to be the **Table Facilitator**, and a student assigned to be the **Table Scribe**.

FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH
COMMUNION • PARTICIPATION • MISSION

Welcome by Main Facilitator/Introductions in Groups (10 minutes)

- The main facilitator gives a welcome to the whole group and provides an overview of the session.
- The table facilitators and scribes introduce themselves and then have table members introduce themselves.

Opening Song/Gathering Prayer (10 minutes)

All Are Welcome (or other appropriate song)

Gathering Prayer

Leader

Come Holy Spirit

All

fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be re-created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

All

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Spirit
we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation,
through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Scripture Reading Acts 2: 1-11, 14-19

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together
And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind,
and it filled the entire house in which they were.

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire,
which parted and came to rest on each one of them.
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.
Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem.
At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused
because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

They were astounded, and in amazement they asked,
“Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?
Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?
We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,
inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia,
Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,
Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome,
both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs,
yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.”

They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another,
“What does this mean?”

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them,
Let this be known to you, and listen to my words.

This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

‘It will come to pass in the last days,’ God says,
‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh.
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your young men shall see visions,
your old men shall dream dreams...
And I will work wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below...’

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Silent Reflection Questions

- How have I experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in my life?
- In what ways do I see the Holy Spirit working in my school or parish?

Prayer

Leader

Come Holy Spirit,
as we move into our reflection session

All

Be with us as a discerning guide to speak what is in our heart,
our experience of Church, our joys and sorrows, hopes and dreams.
May we listen carefully to each other
so that we may discern how you, Holy Spirit,
are calling us to be church at this time in our history.

Leader

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All

Amen.

Synodality and the Listening Session Process (10 minutes)

Main Facilitator

Video of Cardinal Tobin – What is the Synod on *Synodality* - why it is important?

Explanation of the discussion process by Main Facilitator

- Role of Table Facilitator

The table facilitator ensures that all participants have the opportunity to dialogue about the questions, taking care to focus on the dynamics of group sharing and listening. Refer to Guidelines for Table Sharing.

- Role of Table Scribe

The table scribe records key points of the conversations and all discern what are the key themes to present to the Holy Father through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (USCCB)

- Feedback to Large Group

A few groups may give feedback toward the end of the session.

Pope Francis talks about “journeying together” or “walking together” down the same road. This means that we collaborate together and share responsibility for the building up of the whole Church and our parish or other ministry through evangelization, participation in worship, social justice, councils, and governance. As you reflect on the questions below, describe how you have or have not experienced “walking together.”

SMALL GROUPS

Core Question ONE – 25 Minutes

How is this “journeying together” happening today in your school or parish community, or other areas of Church life that you might participate in?

Note for Table Facilitator: Make sure each participant has a copy of the following questions. Ask all to **reflect silently for a few minutes**, preparing their thoughts on each question. Each person will then be given an opportunity to share his/her thoughts with the small group for a maximum of 3 minutes.

The table scribe records key points of the conversations.

- What are some ways you have experienced this “walking together” in your school or parish community?
- If you could sit down with Pope Francis, what would you tell him about young people today? What are some challenges young people are facing today?
- What is the best thing you have participated in that helped deepen your faith or helped engage you in your faith?
- Do you feel as though you and your family matter to the Catholic Church? What are some reasons why or why not?

Note for Table Facilitator: After all have a chance to share their ideas on the above questions, ask the group to reflect silently about what has been shared in the group. After several minutes of silent reflection allow a few minutes for group members to share any final thoughts.

Core Question TWO – 20 Minutes

How are we “walking together” as a Church, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

Note for Table Facilitator: Make sure each participant has a copy of the following questions. Ask all to reflect silently for a few minutes, preparing their thoughts on each question. Each person will then be given an opportunity to share his/her thoughts with the small group for a maximum of 3 minutes.

The table scribe records key points of the conversations.

- What do you, your fellow students and your families need from the Catholic Church? (could include your school, local parish, the Archdiocese, and/or the global Catholic Church).
- At baptism, each of us is called to follow Christ and be His disciple. In what ways can your school, the parish, Archdiocese, or the global Catholic community better engage young people to live out this calling?
- What is something you can contribute to this “journeying together” in your school community, your parish, the larger Church?

Note for Table Facilitator: After all have a chance to share their ideas on the above questions, ask the group to reflect silently about what has been shared in the group. After several minutes of silent reflection allow a few minutes for group members to share any final thoughts.

WRAP UP (10 Minutes)

Main Facilitator

Evaluation of the Time spent together

- How has this discussion given you the opportunity to listen and express and share your own experience of your parish and Church?
- What is one hope you have for the Church as we continue to grow and listen to the Holy Spirit?

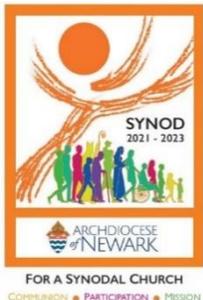
Sending Prayer

Leader Let us take a moment of quiet as we reflect on what we have done here today...

Reader A reading from the Letter of Saint James Jas 1:21-22
Dearest brothers and sisters:
Humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you...
[and] Be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Leader Come Holy Spirit,
we ask you, that by your inspiration,
all of our prayers and actions always begin from you
and inspire others to know you more deeply.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All Amen



Sharing Our Voice in the School Community

High School Listening Session *Participant Sheet*

Gathering Prayer

Leader Come Holy Spirit

All fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader Send forth your Spirit and they shall be re-created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

All O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Spirit
we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation,
through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Scripture Reading Acts 2: 1-11, 14-19

Silent Reflection Questions

- How have I experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in my life?
- In what ways do I see the Holy Spirit working in my school or parish?

Prayer

Leader Come Holy Spirit,
as we move into our reflection session

All Be with us as a discerning guide to speak what is in our heart,
our experience of Church, our joys and sorrows, hopes and dreams.
May we listen carefully to each other
so that we may discern how you, Holy Spirit,
are calling us to be church at this time in our history.

Leader We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All Amen.

Core Question 1: How is this “journeying together” happening today in your school or parish community, or other areas of Church life that you might participate in?

Jot down your thoughts about the following questions before we begin our discussion for Core Question 1.

- What are some ways you have experienced this “walking together” in your school or parish community?
- If you could sit down with Pope Francis, what would you tell him about young people today? What are some challenges young people are facing today?
- What is the best thing you have participated in that helped deepen your faith or helped engage you in your faith?
- Do you feel as though you and your family matter to the Catholic Church? What are some reasons why or why not?

Core Question 2: How are we “walking together” as a Church, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

Jot down your thoughts about the following questions before we begin our discussion for Core Question 2.

- What do you, your fellow students and your families need from the Catholic Church? (could include your school, local parish, the Archdiocese, and/or the global Catholic Church).
- At baptism, each of us is called to follow Christ and be His disciple. In what ways can your school, the parish, Archdiocese, or the global Catholic community better engage young people to live out this calling?
- What is something you can contribute to this “journeying together” in your school community, your parish, the larger Church?

Guidelines for Table

Sharing



Be Aware of the
Time Allotted for
the Process

Pause Briefly
between Speakers

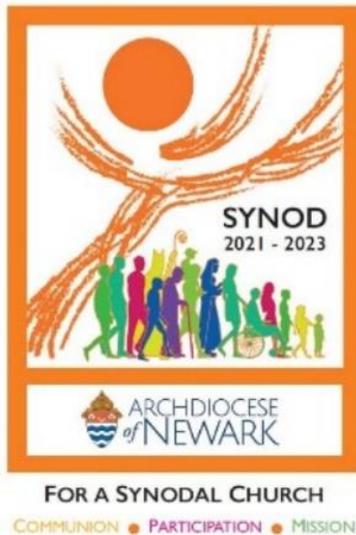
Provide an
Opening for
Others to
Share

Speak
Clearly and
with Respect

Be an
Open-
minded
Listener

Be Attentive & Reflective at the Table

Group Recording Sheet



Listening

Sharing Our Voice in the School Community

Each group facilitator should submit this form to the school's main facilitator. The main facilitator will gather all group reports and share them with the Archdiocesan Synod Team.

Listening Session Information

School: _____

Town: _____

Date of Session: _____

Name of Table Facilitator: _____

How many people were in your group? _____

Who participated?

Male (#) _____ Female (#) _____

Check all that apply.

7th or 8th Grade students

Freshmen

Sophomores

Juniors

Seniors

Note to Scribe: You are trying to capture the essence of the conversation, not all the details. You may want to jot notes down on a blank sheet of paper as the conversation unfolds and then fill in the form after. Please write as neatly as possible and organize the thoughts presented. Work with the group participants to discern the key themes expressed in the conversation.

CORE QUESTION 1: How is this "journeying together" happening today in your school or parish community, or other areas of Church life that you might participate in?

1a) What are some ways you have experienced this "walking together" in your school or parish community?

1b) If you could sit down with Pope Francis, what would you tell him about young people today? What are some challenges youth are facing today?

1c) What is the best thing you have participated in that helped deepen your faith or helped engage you in your faith?

1d) Do you feel as though you and your family matter to the Catholic Church? What are some reasons why or why not?

CORE QUESTION 2: How are we “walking together” as a Church, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

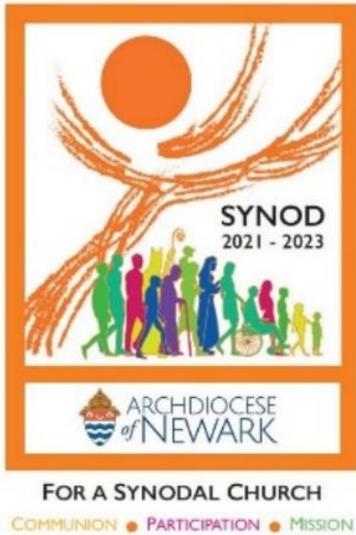
2a) What do you, your fellow students and your families need from the Catholic Church? (could include your school, local parish, the Archdiocese, and/or the global Catholic Church)

2b) At baptism, each of us is called to follow Christ and be His disciple. In what ways can your school, the parish, Archdiocese, or the global Catholic community better engage young people to live out this calling?

2c) What is something you can contribute to this “journeying together” in your school community, your parish, the larger Church?

Thank you for your assistance with this listening session!

Remember to give the completed form to the Main Facilitator.



SCHOOL INPUT FORM

*Must be submitted to the Archdiocesan Schools Office
by March 15, 2022*

Sharing Our Voice in the School Community

The school coordinator will summarize Listening Session input from the small groups into a School Input Form. Your summary can be entered on this form and submitted to Barbara Dolan at barbara.dolan@rcan.org or entered online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WM968CK>

School: _____

Town: _____

School Coordinator's Name: _____

Date/s of Listening Sessions: _____

Total Number of Small Groups: _____

Total Number of Students who Attended School Listening Sessions: _____

Who participated in the Listening Sessions at your school?

Male (#) _____

Female (#) _____

Grade Level of Participants Check all that apply.

- 7th or 8th Grade students
- Freshmen
- Sophomores
- Juniors
- Seniors

Race and Ethnicity of Participants- Check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American or Alaskan Native |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African-American or Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian or Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern or North African | |

CORE QUESTION 1: How is this “journeying together” happening today in your school or parish community, or other areas of Church life that you might participate in?

1a) What are some ways you have experienced this “walking together” in your school or parish community?

1b) If you could sit down with Pope Francis, what would you tell him about young people today? What are some challenges youth are facing today?

1c) What is the best thing you have participated in that helped deepen your faith or helped engage you in your faith?

1d) Do you feel as though you and your family matter to the Catholic Church? What are some reasons why or why not?

CORE QUESTION 2: How are we “walking together” as a Church, and what steps does the Holy Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

2a) What do you, your fellow students and your families need from the Catholic Church? (could include your school, local parish, the Archdiocese, and/or the global Catholic Church)

2b) At baptism, each of us is called to follow Christ and be His disciple. In what ways can your school, the parish, Archdiocese, or the global Catholic community better engage young people to live out this calling?

2c) What is something you can contribute to this “journeying together” in your school community, your parish, the larger Church?

Thank you for providing this input to the Archdiocese for the Synod on Synodality.